

UAlberta & Little Warriors change the trajectory of child sexual abuse victims

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This image shows Drs Jacqui Linder and Peter Silverstone with Glori Meldrum (right), founder and chair of Little Warriors. Changing the Trajectory of Child Sexual Abuse Survivors Credit: Ross Neitz

Today, the University of Alberta and Little Warriors announced the

highly anticipated preliminary results of the clinical trials performed at the Little Warriors Be Brave Ranch, confirming that the four-week intervention program significantly reduces the psychological impacts of child sexual abuse. As the first intensive program to demonstrate such clinical impact, these results suggest a breakthrough for the lasting mental health of child sexual abuse survivors and for the far-reaching outcomes of this severe trauma.

The Be Brave Ranch, whose programming Little Warriors commissioned the University of Alberta's Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry to develop under Dr. Peter Silverstone and Dr. Jacqui Linder, is the first and only facility of its kind to offer intensive, dedicated and multi-modal treatment to child [sexual abuse](#) survivors (aged 8 to 12). The [clinical trials](#) evaluated this new treatment model, which provides child survivors with the unique opportunity to access individual and group therapies in a residential environment, alongside peers who have experienced similar trauma.

Results, published in the *Journal of Child and Adolescent Behaviour*, confirm the program's success, measuring a highly significant reduction in symptoms. This includes a 25% reduction in child post-traumatic stress disorder scores (PTSD), a reduction in the number of [children](#) experiencing PTSD (14 children, down from 26) and a significant reduction in depression and anxiety. Forecasts also suggest reduced mental health related issues and enriched outcomes for these children in the future, potentially improving societal and economic outcomes.

"The Be Brave Ranch offers the caliber of comprehensive treatment that child sexual abuse survivors need and deserve," says Glori Meldrum, founder and chair of Little Warriors. "With peer support, various therapies to reach different personalities, and full program immersion, we have seen significant impacts and growth. Our clinical trial results confirm everything we have worked for, and we are excited to continue

helping children grow into happy, healthy adults."

With child sexual abuse affecting millions of children across North America, and multiple long-term psychiatric and physical outcomes identified, the completion of this phase of the Be Brave Ranch clinical trials signifies a major milestone for children, families and our society as a whole.

"Successful programs can not only reduce the suffering of child survivors, but can also significantly lower future health care costs by changing the health trajectory of children," says Dr. Peter Silverstone, professor of Psychiatry with the University of Alberta's Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry. "These initial results demonstrate that the application of multiple, intensive treatment methods can impact the individual and overarching outcomes of child sexual abuse. In layman's terms, we have uncovered new hope for this horrific crime."

Following these results, Little Warriors and the University of Alberta plan to continue to help support and heal [child sexual abuse](#) survivors and their families at the Be Brave Ranch.

Provided by University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry

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